PS 3505
.0468
T8
1921
Copy 1

# TWO POEMS

by

HENRY RUTGERS CONGER

Class PS3505
Book .O468T8
PRESENTED BY 1921

# TWO POEMS

# Two Poems

## CLASS DAY POEM

## THE PURPLE HILLS

By
HENRY RUTGERS CONGER

WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED FOR THE
CLASS OF EIGHTEEN NINETY-NINE
OF
WILLIAMS COLLEGE
MCMXXI

PS3505
.O468T8
1921

Gift-
Class of 1877
Williams College.
Apr 15 '21

HENRY RUTGERS CONGER, Poet of the Class of Eighteen Ninety-Nine of Williams College, died at his home in Fanwood, New Jersey, on Friday the eighteenth of June, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty, while his Class was holding its Reunion in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

These two poems, written by him while an undergraduate in Williams College, are now printed by his Class as a loving tribute to his memory.

# CLASS DAY POEM

# CLASS DAY POEM

## I

*In the hush of the early summer,*
*'Neath the smile of the soft June sky,*
*We, who have lived together,*
*Gather to say good-by.*
*And now, with our labor ended,*
*And the hours we may linger few,*
*We kneel for our mother's blessing,*
*As is our right to do.*

*Stately and tall is our mother,*
*Tender and strong and wise;*
*With the light of infinite knowledge*
*In the depths of her steadfast eyes.*
*And as we kneel before her,*
*Her voice rings clear and slow,*
*As she speaks the words of the blessing*
*That she gives to her sons, ere they go.*

II

"Sons of my four years' nurture,
Ye who have eaten my bread,
Pause ere you take the journey
Down the wide roads ahead!
Listen! that I may tell you
In simple speech and plain,
How from the debt that ye owe me
Ye may quit yourselves again!

The wisdom of generations
I have spread for your delight;
And the truths that men have died for
Ye may claim as your simple right.
Heirs of the hoarding ages,
How use ye your legacy?
Masters of many talents
Render account to me.

III

"Are ye puffed with the pride of learning?
Are ye pleased with the praise of fools?
Have your minds grown cramped and narrow
With the lore that ye learned in schools?
Has your knowledge made you slothful,
And your culture made you vain,
That ye think to gain without labor
What another must toil to gain?

Then are your years here wasted
    As pearls that are cast to swine!
Then are ye servants of servants,
    And no true sons of mine!
For they who began behind you
    Shall pass you in the race;
And untaught men shall shame you
    In the open market-place!

IV

"From the quiet heart of the mountains
Ye must take journey, down
To the world, that is ever careless
Of the skirts of a scholar's gown.
And the sheltered life of college
Ye must leave behind you then,
And bear your parts in the battle
Where men fight hard with men.

There there is naught to help you
    But your wit and strength of limb,
There every man is your master
    Until you have mastered him.
For a great law governs the fighting
    And all are ruled thereby—
'He that is strong shall conquer!
    He that is weak must die!'

V

"Therefore, that ye may merit
Men's praise when your heads are gray,
Cling to the good ye have gathered
From my teaching that ends to-day.
Ye have learned many true sayings
And many wise maxims heard,
For some ye know the reason,
And for some ye must take my word.

But, though ye forget the others,
    These two hold firm and clear:
The first is—'*He that would win must work,*'
    The second—'*Thou shalt not fear!*'
For the vices of a strong man
    Are pardoned in the end;
But he that is born a coward
    Hath neither foe nor friend!

VI

"Be tender, and quick to pity
At the sight of another's wrong,
Humble before a weaker,
Cringing not to the strong.
Paying each service twofold,
Nor counting the debt clear then;
Keeping your faith with women,
Speaking the truth to men.

## VII

"High in the purple mountains,
Where the world's strife cannot come,
Ringed by the iron cordon
Of the hills that guard my home,
I gather my sons about me
And teach them at my knee,
And when they have learned their lesson,
My sons go forth from me.

Over the world they wander,
In the sunshine and wind and storm,
But I sit here in the quiet room
And keep the hearthstone warm;
Watching and listening and waiting
For their footsteps at the door,
Till one by one as the years go by
My sons come home once more.

Then I fling wide the portal
And welcome them to the hall,
With praise for the strong, and pity
For the weak, and love for all.
And the welcome that I give them
Is reward for those that win;
And they who are spent with fighting
Find a new strength therein.

And when they have told their stories,
    And rested a little space,
They rise, and get them forth again
    Each man to his own place;
To take the task that waits him,
    And labor to the end,
That he may earn a living
    For wife and child and friend.

Careless of sneers and frowning
From curs that cringe and shirk,
Asking no greater pleasure
Than the sight of his finished work.

VIII

"Ye who to-day must follow
Whither your fates shall lead,
These are your elder brothers!
Prove yourselves of the breed!
See that ye count as shameful
No work your hands can do;
And when ye are spent, come back to me
That I may comfort you.

Now, through the open portal,
    Rise and go forth to-day!
And a mother's blessing go with you,
    To help you on your way."

Williamstown, June 20, 1899.

# THE PURPLE HILLS

# THE PURPLE HILLS

Air—"Annie Lisle"

Dying echoes fill the valley,
    Heralding the night,
As we gather on the campus
    In the waning light.
In the west the sunset's crimson
    All the heaven fills,
And its glory rims the edges
    Of our purple hills.

Fast the length'ning shadows gather,
Sunset dims to grey,
And the calling winds of evening
Through the branches play.
With the far stars pale above them
While day's tumult stills,
Watching us who know and love them,
Stand the purple hills.

Safe within our little valley
From the outer strife,
Are enshrined the happy mem'ries
Of our college life.
And when darker days have found us,
'Mid this old world's ills;
Still our hearts will turn with gladness
To our purple hills.

Williamstown, 1898.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 018 602 692 5